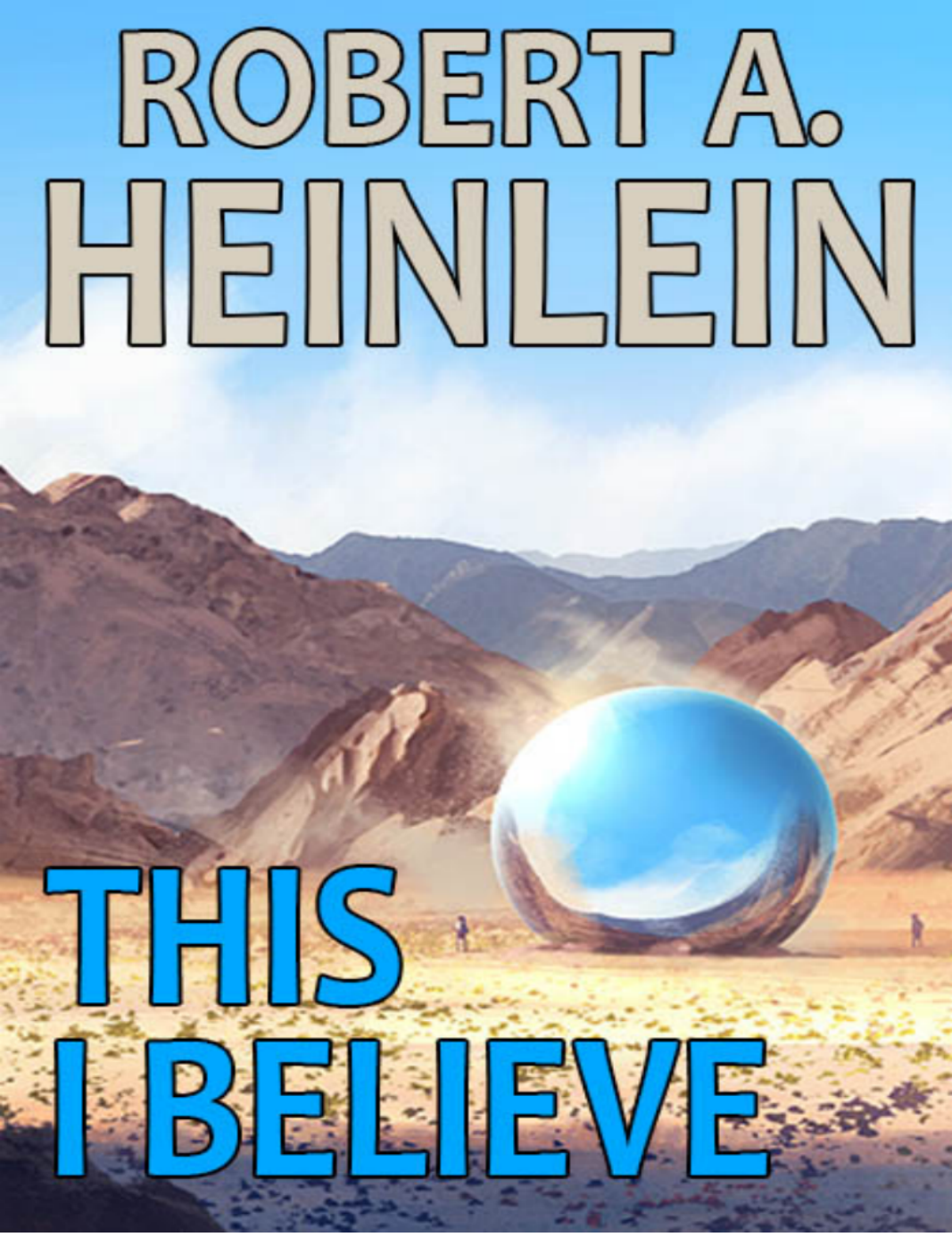
ROBERT A. HEINLEIN



THIS I BELIEVE

This I Believe

by Robert A. Heinlein

"I am not going to talk about religious beliefs but about matters so obvious

that it has gone out of style to mention them. I believe in my neighbors. I

know their faults, and I know that their virtues far outweigh their faults.

"Take Father Michael down our road a piece. I'm not of his creed, but I know

that goodness and charity and lovingkindness shine in his daily actions. I

believe in Father Mike. If I'm in trouble, I'll go to him."

"My next-door neighbor is a veterinary doctor. Doc will get out of bed after a

hard day to help a stray cat. No fee--no prospect of a fee--I believe in Doc.

"I believe in my townspeople. You can know on any door in our town saying,

'I'm hungry,' and you will be fed. Our town is no exception. I've found the

same ready charity everywhere. But for the one who says, 'To heck with you - I

got mine,' there are a hundred, a thousand who will say, "Sure, pal, sit

down."

"I know that despite all warnings against hitchhikers I can step up to the

highway, thumb for a ride and in a few minutes a car or a truck will stop and

someone will say, 'Climb in Mac - how far you going?'

"I believe in my fellow citizens. Our headlines are splashed with crime yet

for every criminal there are 10,000 honest, decent, kindly men. If it were not

so, no child would live to grow up. Business could not go on from day to day.

Decency is not news. It is buried in the obituaries, but is a force stronger

than crime. I believe in the patient gallentry of nurses and the tedious

sacrifices of teachers. I believe in the unseen and unending fight against

desperate odds that goes on quietly in almost every home in the land.

"I believe in the honest craft of workmen. Take a look around you. There never

were enough bosses to check up on all that work. From Independence Hall to the

Grand Coulee Dam, these things were built level and square by craftsmen who

were honest in their bones.

"I believe that almost all politicians are honest. . .there are hundreds of

politicians, low paid or not paid at all, doing their level best without

thanks or glory to make our system work. If this were not true we would never

have gotten past the 13 colonies.

"I believe in Rodger Young. You and I are free today because of endless

unnamed heroes from Valley Forge to the Yalu River. I believe in -- I am proud

to belong to -- the United States. Despite shortcomings from lynchings to bad

faith in high places, our nation has had the most decent and kindly internal

practices and foreign policies to be found anywhere in history.

"And finally, I believe in my whole race. Yellow, white, black, red, brown. In

the honesty, courage, intelligence, durability, and goodness of the

overwhelming majority of my brothers and sisters everywhere on this planet. I

am proud to be a human being. I believe that we have come this far by the skin

of our teeth. That we always make it just by the skin of our teeth, but that

we will always make it. Survive. Endure. I believe that this hairless embryo

with the aching, oversize brain case and the

opposable thumb, this animal barely up from the apes will endure. Will endure

longer than his home planet -- will spread out to the stars and beyond,

carrying with him his honesty and his insatiable curiosity, his unlimited

courage and his noble essential decency.

"This I believe with all my heart."

Robert A. Heinlein wrote this item in 1952. His wife, Virginia

Heinlein, chose

to read it when she accepted NASA's Distinguished Public Service Medal on

October 6, 1988, on the Grand Master's behalf (it was a posthumous award).

Mrs. Heinlein received a standing ovation.